Leys News

Your independent local community newspaper FREE

Follow us on Twitter

It's a great way to keep in touch and find out about deadlines and our latest advertising offers!

@leysnewseditor
@OxfordTodayNews

ISSUE 143 | FEBRUARY/MARCH 2017

FAREWELL TO SALLY

SALLY Meachim, the Clockhouse Project Development Worker for the Leys Community Development Initiative is leaving her post so that she can care for her mother.

Sally has been an important part of the community on the Leys for many years, and has been involved with the project for more than eight years.

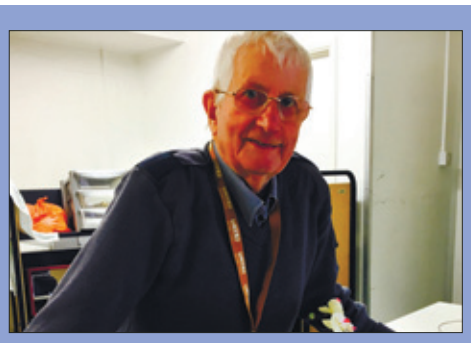
As Leys News went to press, Sally said: "I would like to thank all Leys CDI trustees and staff, for being so understanding and generous about my decision to resign, in view of my mother's health situation and support needs.

"As I hope everyone knows, there are very few things in life that matter more to me than Leys CDI! – but love for my family is one of them. It has been a joy and an honour working with you all, and I will never forget my wonderful eight and half years with the Clockhouse Project.
Thank you for your unfailing help and support, and for teaching me so much about what makes a good community project! It's exciting to think of what the CDI is going to achieve in the future, with your continuing commitment, skills, hard work, and enthusiasm. Follow your dreams."

Sally's last day will be Monday 27 February and will be celebrated with a farewell bring-and-share tea between 2–4pm at the Clockhouse.

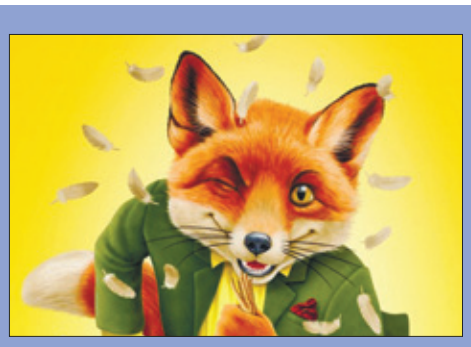
The Clockhouse Project will continue and Leys CDI will start the recruitment process of a new Clockhouse Project Development Worker shortly.

The Clockhouse's Sally Meachim (*left*) pictured with Jim Hewitt and Ines Kretzschmar.



A Friendly welcome for everyone at Friendleys

PAGES 3



Win family tickets to see Fantastic Mr Fox

PAGE 11

Dovecote Children's Centre 2
Refugee Charity 2
CDI Clock House 3
Debt Advice. 4
One Oxfordshire proposal 6
Valentine's Day Feature 8
Fun for children 10
Leys Learning Centre 11
What's on the Leys 14

LEYS NEWS ISSUE 143

LEYS NEWS is an independent newspaper and a social enterprise. It is owned by Leys News Limited, is part of the Community Media Group, and is funded through a mixture of grants and advertising revenue. It is delivered free to homes and businesses across the Leys. Leys News is produced by a team of volunteers who attend free Community Journalism Training courses.

If you would like to volunteer as part of our team and help to produce your local, independent newspaper please email the editor (details below) for more information and an informal chat about how you can help.

CONTACT

Address: Leys News, 26 Kingfisher Green, Greater Leys, Oxford OX4 7BX (Vehicle access via Jack Argent Close)

Phone: 01865 711756

Editor: editor@leysnews.co.uk

Advertising: advertising@leysnews.co.uk

Website: www.leysnews.co.uk

WHO'S WHO

Board of Directors: Sasha East (chair), Teresa Fieldwick, Ines Kretzschmar, David Potter, Alex Solaja

Editor: Sarah Edwards

Business Manager: John Charlton

Design: Julian Dourado

Distribution Manager: Lorraine Heritage

Volunteers: Janet Pavelin, Trio Watson

Contributions by: Richard Chidwick, Stella Gathenya, Meghan McCauley and Jane Yates

Published by Leys News Ltd.
Printed by Newbury Weekly News (Printers) Ltd, Newspaper House, Faraday Road, Newbury, Berkshire RG14 2DW

ISSN 2046-2948

Leys News is a company limited by guarantee No. 3591512

LEYS NEWS acknowledges financial assistance from: A2 Dominion, Catalyst Communities Housing Association, GreenSquare, Oxford Brookes University, Oxford City Council, the Blackbird Leys Parish Council

Charity employs support workers to help Syrian refugees

By **Richard Chidwick**

CONNECTION Support is seeking new ways to help migrants from Syria overcome language barriers and integrate into Oxford society.

Enas Abdelhady has been working full-time for Connection as a Support Worker since November 2016, working under the guidance of Lise Jamieson, manager of the project.

Prior to her employment Enas had been a Volunteer for Connection for a year having arrived herself in the UK in 2009. She told me how since moving to the UK and relocating to Oxford she has helped Syrian refugees who speak Arabic to learn more about their surrounding area. For example, she explained how she would help a client find where the local Halal Butcher could be located on Cowley Road.

For someone new to Oxford, arriving as a refugee as a migrant from war torn Syria, perhaps a camp, the first thing to take in would be this small city. For many of us daily life in Oxford is far from a struggle, but for someone new to the language and culture, that is where support worker Enas steps in to help out.

Enas said: "I couldn't ignore their needs; they need help as they are in crisis. I tried to find out about getting donations and support on-line. My friend told me about volunteering with Connection Support and I joined them as a volunteer in November 2015.

She added: "At the beginning the people need extra support as there is a different culture, attitude and system. So I tried to explain the background, provide information about social services etc. as this kind of information helps to let people know about things such as Child Protection and Women's Rights, which we don't back home. It is about helping people to be happy and understand about different cultures, religion and attitude."

She added: "It's about integrating people into society; housing, transportation education and shopping for example, how to get from place to place, I also try to explain what they don't understand and let them know what is available in Oxford and what is not."

Lisé Jamieson, Team Manager at Connection Support said: "Arabic speaking volunteers have been a valuable resource to the smooth running of this project. They have been vital in helping the families to settle and integrate into the community. The volunteers have helped with translation/interpreting at support meetings and are able to support the families in their journey to independence by offering reassurance and understanding. The volunteers have a key role in helping the families become familiar with their local area, local bus routes, shops, health centres, schools and introducing them to the Syrian community. We are particularly grateful to all the volunteers for giving their time for the benefit of these vulnerable families."

Enas Abdelhady

■ **For more information visit www.connectionsupport.org.uk**

YOUR LOCAL REPRESENTATIVES

Blackbird Leys Parish Council

Chairman: Gordon Roper. **Vice Chair:** Ann Booker. **Non-position holders:** John Dillon, Chris Hatton, Daniel Jones, Kelvin Launchbury, Peter Nowland and Pat Stannard. *For contact and further details see page 7.*

Oxford City Council

BLACKBIRD LEYS WARD

Linda Smith – *Labour.*
125 Oxford Road, Old Marston, OX3 0RB
☎ 07961 121704
E: cllrlsmith@oxford.gov.uk

Rae Humberstone – Labour.
75 Little Bury, Greater Leys, OX4 7UZ
☎ 01865 779678 & 07768 429566
E: cllrrhumberstone@oxford.gov.uk

NORTHFIELD BROOK WARD

Sian Taylor – *Labour.*
5 Regent Street, Oxford, OX4 1QU
☎ 07767 311425
E: cllrstaylor@oxford.gov.uk

Jennifer Pegg – *Labour*
☎ 07525 720599
E: cllrjpegg@oxford.gov.uk

Oxfordshire County Council

LEYS DIVISION

Steve Curran – *Labour.* 88 Fairacres Road, Oxford, OX4 1TG
☎ 01865 727824
& 07941 785538
E: stephen.curran@oxfordshire.gov.uk

Member of Parliament

Andrew Smith – *Labour.*
Unit A, Bishops Mews, Transport Way, Oxford.
☎ 01865 595790
E: andrewsmith.mp@virgin.net

Surgery: Every third Friday at the Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre from 3pm.

Dovecote Children's Centre nominated for top award

By **Helena Clennett**

THE Dovecote children and families centre based in the Leys was nominated for a prestigious award in November 2016 at the 'Children and Young People Now' awards in London.

It was the 11th year of the awards ceremony, which has become the "gold standard for everyone working with children, young people and families," according to the CYPNA website.

While the project did not win on the night, the nomination is a huge accomplishment. It offers recognition for the valuable work done by projects and initiatives in the public, private and voluntary sector and also gives them a chance to raise their profile with the general public and potential funders.

"It is a bit like the Oscars for projects working with young people," said Carol Richards, Children and Families services manager at the Dovecote centre. "It is a major achievement to be shortlisted, and it is great to be recognised not just locally but nationally."

The Dovecote was started by local parents in 1996. They run projects and after school activities supporting children from the local area, including some from Mabel Prichard School which supports children with learning disabilities.

The nomination in the 'Youth Work Award' category celebrated the centre's work on the 'Dovecote Afloat' project, which was set up in 2011 and aimed to help projects working with children and young people access the Thames and Oxford Canal by renting out a 60ft narrow boat for use on days out on the water.

Children who accessed the project found it both educational and fun. Feedback given to the co-ordinators included a comment from Liam, 9, who said "I've learnt how to drive the boat. It was awesome."

The project is not currently running due to lack of funding but perhaps the award nomination will bring much needed attention from those who can help.

S & R CHILDS
FUNERAL SERVICES
Managed by the third generation of Childs family.

Pharmacy House
69 London Road
Headington
Oxford OX3 9AA
Tel: 01865 427272

142 Oxford Road
Cowley
Oxford
OX4 2EA
Tel: 01865 714007

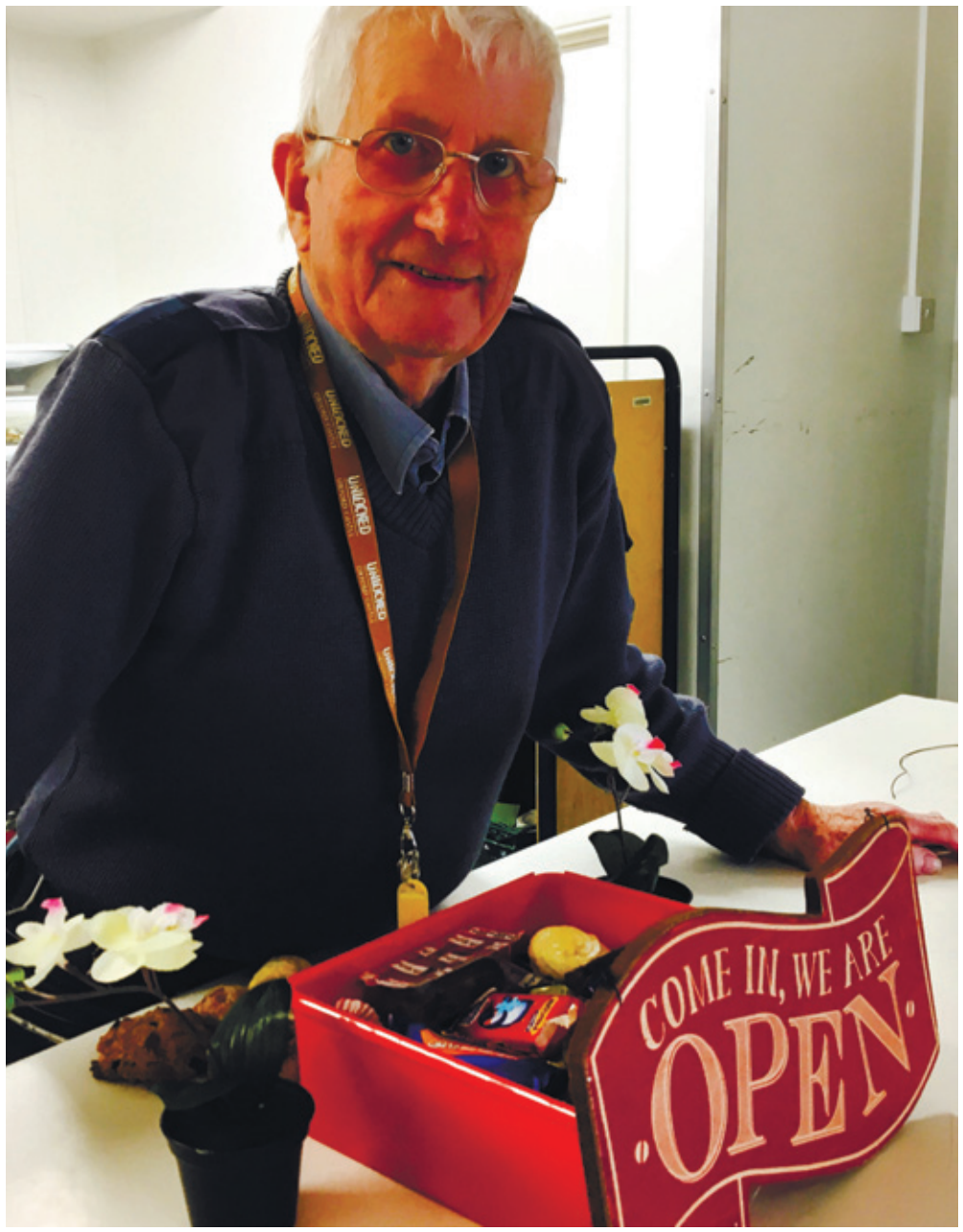
10 The Parade
Oxford Road
Kidlington OX5 1EE
Tel: 01865 378888

1 Courtland Road
Rosehill
Oxford OX4 4HZ
Tel: 01865 772780

4 Elms Parade
Botley
Oxford OX2 9LG
Tel: 01865 245464

www.srchilds.co.uk info@srchilds.co.uk
We specialise in repatriation to and from the UK

Part of Dignity plc. A British Company



A Friendly welcome for everyone at Friendleys

A THRIVING social club in Blackbird Leys is keen to spread the word and encourage more local people to join.

The Friendleys Group meets on Wednesdays from 10am–12noon at the Blackbird Leys Community Centre and welcomes new members of all ages. Among the activities taking place at the moment is seated bowls, which is being run by Dan from Oxford City Council.

He said: "It is a great game that requires skill and a good throw. Although it is simple it is really enjoyable."

Alan Wright who looks after the all-important refreshments at the group said: "My wife died a little while ago and I have been helping out here for a couple of years now. I love it. It is a great group, everyone is very friendly."

■ **Anyone who would like to join the group can go along to the community centre from 10am on Wednesdays.**

Leys CDI Clock House seeks volunteer drivers

By **Richard Chidwick**

THE Leys CDI and Clockhouse Project is seeking volunteer drivers to help bring more people together and encourage them to get out and about, and take part in activities and community groups.

Adrian Turner who volunteers as a driver said: "The Clockhouse is for people who are 50 years and over who want to take part in a range of activities. My role as a volunteer driver, is to get in touch with The Clock House and collect the people who want to take part in groups here."

Being able to offer free transport to local people who would otherwise be house bound is a very valuable service and one that The Clockhouse would like to expand.

Sally Meachim, Project Development Worker, said: "We started piloting a scheme in the summer and currently have two volunteer drivers but would love to have some more. Our transport scheme is to help Leys residents over 50 with mobility difficulties to reach and enjoy Clockhouse project activities of their choice. Drivers need to have a DBS check, which we can arrange, and their own vehicle with up-to-date MOT and insurance. We will refund petrol costs.

"Mobility difficulties can be very isolating, so this is a great way to make a big difference to someone locally. An hour or two a week is all that's needed."

Adrian Turner, volunteer driver for The Clockhouse.

Adrian added: "We provide support to anyone in Blackbird Leys and Greater Leys who wants to come to The Clockhouse. We want a few more drivers so if I'm tied up we always have a volunteer driver available. Given there are only two drivers at present we really need more to come on board."

■ **For more information about volunteering as a driver please contact Sally Meachim, Clockhouse Project Development Worker, 01865 395908**

Oxford TODAY

Get the latest local community news on your mobile phone, tablet and PC.

Oxford Today is the digital home of the Community Media Group. Publishers of all the hyperlocal newspapers that are distributed across Oxford.

Oxford Today will give you:

- The latest news stories affecting you in your local area and across Oxford
- Events happening across Oxford
- Jobs and recruitment news
- Opportunities to upload your own events and news stories
- 24 hour news

www.oxfordtoday.news

@oxfordtodaynews

Oxford Today

Community Media Group
26 Kingfisher Green, Oxford OX4 7BX.
T: 01865 711756. E: info@leysnews.co.uk
www.communitymediagroup/org.uk

Struggling with debts? Citizens Advice can help

MORE people saddled with unmanageable debts are turning to Citizens Advice, leading the charity to call for people to seek help before they reach crisis point.

Nationally, a rising number of people have resorted to a debt relief order (DRO) since the amount of debt covered by a DRO rose from £15,000 to £20,000 last October.

DROs are a last resort for people who have exhausted all options for repaying their debts and won't be able to pay in the near future. They work by "pausing" most of your debts for a year so that your creditors can't chase you for repayment. At the end of the year, unless your circumstances change, your debts will be written off.

Debt write-offs can have a serious impact on people's credit rating, which makes it more difficult to take out more credit agreements or even open a new bank account.

Citizens Advice is now urging people who are failing to keep on top of their debts to seek advice early, so that they have the best chance of managing their debts and avoiding debt write-offs. An adviser said: "We will discuss your individual situation and look at the options available to you, so that you can make an informed decision about the best kind of debt management for you."

■ **For further help, phone 03444 111 444 visit www.citizens.advice.org.uk or drop in to your nearest Citizens Advice.**

■ **For locations and opening hours see www.citizensadvice.org.uk/local/oxfordshire-south-vale**

Age UK Oxfordshire needs your nimble knitting needles!

AGE UK Oxfordshire is taking part in the Big Knit fundraising initiative, now in its 13th year. Age UK Oxfordshire and its local supporters knit little hats, about the size of an egg cosy, to go on top of Innocent smoothie drinks bottles. For every hat that Age UK Oxfordshire sends to Innocent, 25p is donated by Innocent towards the charity's unfunded Information and Advice Helpline.

This year, Innocent has challenged Age UK Oxfordshire to double the number of hats that they made last year and to create a whopping 28,000 little knitted hats.

Rachel Boland, Head of Information and Advice at Age UK Oxfordshire said: "Our helpline supports over 3,000 people each year, giving them advice on a wide range of topics affecting older people and also linking them in to essential local services. As an organisation we have such close links to local services across Oxfordshire that we can assist in ways that national helplines can't."

To spread the word near and far that their Helpline needs your knitting needles to be active, Age UK Oxfordshire did the mannequin challenge. The mannequin challenge is a viral internet video trend whereby participants freeze in motion, like mannequins, while a camera films the scene. Staff and volunteers at the charity froze in a frenzied motion of knitting and counting little woollen hats. The comedian, Bill Oddie, gave the charity permission to use his 'Knitting Song' in the video. The video can be viewed on their website: http://www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire/news--campaigns/the-big-knit/

For more information about Age UK Oxfordshire's Big Knit and how to get involved please call 07827 235 405 or visit us at http://www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire/news--campaigns/the-big-knit/

Age UK Oxfordshire is an independent local charity dedicated to giving older people in Oxfordshire comfort, support and opportunities to have a life. The charity provides free local information, advice and support; commercial products and services; and research and campaigns on the issues that matter to people in later life.

■ **For further information on services and volunteering opportunities call 0345 450 1276 or go to www.ageuk.org.uk/oxfordshire**

New bicycle-hire app

CHILTERN Railways have partnered with Bainton Bikes and Donkey Republic to offer Oxford Parkway customers bicycle-hire using just their smartphone.

The system, already in action at other locations in Oxford, increases onward travel flexibility for rail customers from the recently built station and adds to Oxford's sustainable transport options.

Users rent bikes for a specific length of time and unlock the bike through the Donkey Republic smartphone app. The bicycle can then be locked and unlocked using the app throughout the rental period giving users the opportunity to stop at their leisure. Justin Baines, Commercial Director at Chiltern Railways said: "Our aim is to offer our customers the best travel experience. This partnership with Bainton Bikes extends onward travel options for customers and provides wider accessibility to the Oxford area."

Hire prices are as follows:

Duration of Hire	*Hire Charge*
2hrs	£7.50
6hrs	£10.50
12hrs	£12.75
1 day	£15

■ **To book your Bainton bike from Oxford Parkway station please visit www.baintonbikes.com**

ADVERTISEMENT

Carers required

at Potters Court and Frys Court
Greater Leys

- Guaranteed minimum of 30 hours per week (a minimum of £241.50 for four shifts), plus usual enhancements for weekends and bank holidays
- Option to do more shifts, including nights
- Care experience preferred
- Training provided where necessary

Call 01865 744 174 or apply online at www.1st-homecare.com

Registered company 1st Homecare (Oxford) Ltd Registered number 04374304
Registered with the Care Quality Commission

Half term fun at Blenheim

HEAD to Blenheim Palace this February Half Term, from 11–19 February, to enjoy new immersive activities, meet incredible insects, explore exciting exhibitions and discover the great outdoors.

New for 2017, Blenheim Palace is hosting Lords & Ladies Workshops, 11–19 February. As the home of the 12th Duke and Duchess of Marlborough the Oxfordshire Stately Home is the perfect place for children to learn all about the history of aristocracy, what would have been expected in their lessons and for them to dress up and have fun.

Learn how to bow, curtesy, dress and dance, as well as practise etiquette lessons. Children can make music using historic instruments, play historic games including blind man's bluff and checkers, and dress up as a Lord or Lady themselves with wigs, hats, cloaks, eyebrows, and makeup. The whole workshop will provide an exciting insight into life as a Lord or Lady of a Great House.

Meet incredible insects as Blenheim Palace's iconic Butterfly House re-opens on 11 February with dozens of exotic butterflies from all over the world. The hatchery opened twice daily to release our newest additions. A family of Zebra Finches also live here and can be seen on your visit.

Explore the great outdoors in Blenheim Palace's family-friendly Pleasure Gardens. Discover the giant 'Marlborough' hedge maze – the world's second largest symbolic hedge maze, enjoy the Adventure Playground and ride the Miniature Train too.

For older children and history enthusiasts head inside Blenheim Palace to see the new Passion for Fashion Exhibition, 11 February – 23 April. Displayed throughout the State Rooms, this exciting new exhibition will take a look at the clothes, underclothes, shoes and accessories which would have been worn by some of the more colourful characters in the Palace's 300-year history – as well as considering the part that arsenic, lead, mercury and mousetraps played in the styles of the day.

As well as the many examples of adults' and children's items dating from the 18th and 19th centuries, the exhibition will celebrate the on-going relationship with the House of Dior – from the early catwalk shows of the 1950s right up to the launch of their Cruise collection which took place here in the Palace in May 2016.

WHAT: February Half Term at Blenheim Palace

WHEN: 11 February – 19 February

WHY VISIT: Enjoy new immersive activities, meet incredible insects, explore exciting exhibitions and discover the great outdoors at Blenheim Palace.

ADMISSION: Park & Gardens Ticket* Adult £14.90, Child £6.90, Family £39.90

■ **Website: blenheimpalace.com**

News from the Leys Learning Centre

By **Sasha East**

WE BEGAN the New Year with our first ever courses starting at Leys News' own offices at Kingfisher Green. On a cold and frosty Monday morning learners and tutors met for our first course entitled "Knowing Me!" a course designed to help explore and build confidence – a skill we all need to improve. We have also been running two successful IT courses from the Community Centre and learners have been beavering away learning all about spreadsheets and word processing.

Sadly our Wordsmiths of War Course didn't run this time but we will keep putting the word out there in the hope that we will receive enough interest for this fascinating topic.

Still to come is the Build Your Resilience Toolkit course on the 10 February on Friday mornings which will explore art and science based ideas and techniques to build resilience to life's stresses and challenges.

Feeling Nervous about Getting Back to work? If so then the You're Hired! Course may be just for you starting Tuesday 7 March at 10am this course runs for two hours per week for five weeks.

Celebrate and learn about Women of the World in this taster session to mark International Women's Day on Friday 10 March from 1pm to 4pm.

Explore the lives and works of Caribbean writers in Island Ink taking place on Wednesday afternoons for five weeks starting 8 March.

Learn all about working with children in our Introduction to Childcare course which will be held at Oxford Academy School on Wednesday, 6.30–8.30pm for five weeks, starting 5 March.

Ever wanted to learn more about communities and how to make a difference in our Community Development Course which will start on Tuesday 25 April for five weeks at The Learning Centre in the Library.

This time our two IT courses will be Using the Internet and Email on a Tuesday evening and Powerpoint and Speaking on a Thursday both starting week beginning 6 March and running for five weeks from 6pm to 8pm at Blackbird Leys Community Centre.

We will also be providing CV writing workshops at the Community Centre every fortnight on a Wednesday afternoon from 3pm to 5.45pm.

In other exciting news we have been working with the library staff and in the next few weeks Abingdon & Witney College will be providing a member of staff to take enquiries about courses and learning in Blackbird Leys which will also enable the library to stay open more. This will mean that the library will no longer close at lunchtimes on Mondays, Wednesdays and Thursdays however not all library facilities will be available during these times.

We will also be open for learning on Tuesday afternoons and Fridays and we are looking at setting up a monthly book club or reading club and a weekly Newspapers and Discussion group.

■ **If you are interested in any of these courses and activities please pop into the Library and leave a message for me or email sashaeast@abingdon-witney.ac.uk**

Oxfordshire Adult Learning
PROVIDED BY ABINGDON & WITNEY COLLEGE

Learning for Wellbeing Course

Build Your Resilience Toolkit

NEW YEAR - NEW START

Exploring tools & techniques to deal with life's stresses and pressures

A free fun course held over 5 sessions – 2.5 hours per week

- Uses a range of arts and science based methods
- Reduce stress so that you can thrive not just survive
- Develop your own tools and strategies to become more resilient
- Reduce the likelihood and impact of sick days caused by stress

'You can't stop the waves but you can learn to surf!'

The course will be held at The Leys News office, Kingfisher Green, Greater Leys Oxford OX4 7BX
Starting Friday 10th February 2017 10am-12.30
(last session Friday, 10th March)

EVERYONE WELCOME

Take the first step toward a more positive future and access further learning opportunities

If you would like further information or wish to enrol on the course please contact:
Sasha East, Community Development Manger
Email: Sasha.East@abingdon-witney.ac.uk or Mobile: 0738 7108 486

One Oxfordshire is the 'wrong proposal at the wrong time' says City Council leader

CLLR BOB PRICE Leader of Oxford City Council has said that Oxfordshire County Council's proposal to create a single council for the whole of Oxfordshire is the wrong proposal at the wrong time, but local people are being urged to have their say.

Cllr Price said: "Previously, all the Oxfordshire councils agreed that they would focus on a devolution proposal to central Government that would bring long term new budgets into Oxfordshire to deliver the things that the county most needs: better transport infrastructure, a joined up approach to housing, and investment in our training and skills for the modern workforce. The proposal involves a joint body including all the councils and an elected Mayor. Building on our current joint bodies, this would enable us to make progress on these issues quickly and efficiently."

UNITARY AUTHORITY

Oxfordshire County Council has proposed a single unitary authority for the county and believes this makes most sense. It wants to hear from local people as part of a consultation process.

The county currently has a two-tier local government – a county council plus five district and city councils. Oxfordshire County Council thinks that all of Oxfordshire's six councils should be abolished and replaced with one new unitary council which it says would save £20m each year – money that would pay for better services and keep council tax low. That money would be enough to fill over 300,000 potholes or provide 1 million hours of home care.

The council says that to have one authority would be simpler for residents and business, with one website and one point of contact.

A spokesman said: "One councillor would represent your community and be accountable for all services. As members of an 'area board' serving the existing district or city areas, each councillor would take decisions affecting their community and also the county as a whole. Environmental services such as street cleaning, countryside services and grounds maintenance would be properly joined up and managed locally to respond to community needs."

OTHER OPTION

However, Councillor Bob Price disagrees. He said: "The creation of a single unitary council for the whole of Oxfordshire would be highly disruptive for local services and will take years to create. By contrast, a Combined Authority and Elected Mayor could be created very quickly, and that option has the support of our Local Economic Partnership (OxLEP) as well. The savings of £20m a year that are claimed is very small against a total budget of over £821m for the new authority, and fails to take account of the high costs of the transition in redundancies and reorganisations. That's just 2.4% savings a year which could be saved more easily by changing services within current structures."

The reason for the proposed change is because central government is changing the way councils are funded, and councils will soon have to pay for services mainly from council tax and business rates. Unless local government is reorganised, Oxfordshire County Councils claims that it will be difficult to pay for vital public services for local communities and vulnerable people as the population increases and gets older.

Bringing together social services, housing, leisure and welfare benefits would mean joined up support for people who need extra help, improving health and wellbeing. And joining up planning, housing, jobs and transport would mean Oxfordshire's housing shortage can be addressed, along with investment in vital infrastructure such as roads.

This is a draft proposal and Oxfordshire County Council wants to hear from residents, before finalising the proposal and sending it to the government for a decision. To find out more and have your say, go to www.oneoxfordshire.org or go to a drop-in event at a library near you. Dates of the events are available on the website.

REMOTE

Cllr Bob Price added: "A unitary county council would mean a threat to local communities through a remote planning process that could impose new homes on communities against the wishes of locally elected councillors and communities.

"A requirement to equalise council tax across the county, with big increases for many residents. The proposed complex model for Council Tax setting has not been allowed anywhere else in the country.

"A reduction in local democracy by placing all significant decision making powers in the hands of a single body and removing the easy access that there is currently to local councillors. Governance from County Hall over a population of 800,000 people by the end of the next decade will remove local accountability and will struggle to listen effectively to the concerns of local communities.

"For the people of Oxford, a unitary Council would be a disaster. Harmonisation of services across the county would rip up the City's approach to key services like housing and homelessness, climate change, advice services, recycling and recreation and the arts. The needs of a multi-ethnic and socially mixed urban community+ are very different to the more rural parts of the county. The city is also a focus for the economic vitality of the county, the region and the UK as a whole and there is a delicate balance between its economic, social, cultural and academic sectors that needs careful management. These proposals fail to address these needs.

"The people of Oxford need control of their community to reflect their needs, not those of other parts of a very diverse county area.

"We would urge the County Council to work with all the Districts and the Local Enterprise Partnership towards the consensus that we have been building around the devolution bid, and the resources from government that it brings into Oxfordshire."

■ **What do YOU think about One Oxfordshire? How would it affect YOU? Follow us on Twitter @ OxfordTodayNews and find us on Facebook Oxford Today News or email editor@leysnews.co.uk**

Want to ADVERTISE in LEYS NEWS?

To discuss your advert email John at advertising@leysnews.co.uk or call 01865 711756

Earn money from your spare room this summer!

01865 759670

hostfamily.ef.com

EF offers:

>flexible dates for a minimum of 2 weeks

> 24 hour local support

> full 7-day activity time-table

> host up to 4 students in a house

Student allocation starting now! Don't miss out!

EducationFirst

Nominations open for the 2017 Community Policing Awards

NOMINATIONS are open for this year's Thames Valley Police Community Policing Awards. The Awards are an opportunity for members of the public to recognise the work of community officers, staff and volunteers.

It's very easy to nominate someone who you know has gone above and beyond in their role. Should they be recognised for their hard work and effort over the last year? Do you have an example of how they have exceeded what is expected of them?

In its 16th year, the award ceremony will be held at Eynsham Hall in May.

Winner of the 2016 Volunteer Award, Melanie Ridgeway, said being chosen as a winner is a huge honour. "Winning the award was a very special event for me and acknowledged all the commitment and work I have happily given to the Mounted Section over the years. Working with such a dedicated team of people is a pleasure and I look forward to my continuing volunteering sessions"

There are seven categories this year:

● **Community Police Officer 2017**
Do you know a neighbourhood police officer who has made a difference to your community?

● **Police Community Support Officer (PCSO) 2017**
Can you think of a PCSO who has made an outstanding contribution to your community?

● **Special Constable 2017**
Special Constables are volunteer police officers who help to serve your communities. Do you know a Special who has gone above and beyond to serve your community?

● **Diversity Champion 2017**
Diversity Champions improve engagement with minority groups in the community, work towards increasing diversity and improving accessibility between the Force and the public.

Do you know someone who has helped to improve diversity in your community?

● **Cadet 2017**
Cadets are young dedicated volunteers who want to make a difference in your community. Do you know a cadet who supports fellow cadets, shows initiative, supports community events, is committed to and is an advocate for the police force?

● **Volunteer 2017**
Volunteers donate their time to the police force. Do you know a volunteer who supports police community engagement in your area?

● **Community Volunteer 2017**
Our new category, Community Volunteers are not associated with Thames Valley Police but support community engagement.
Do you know a volunteer that assists with community concerns and enforcing the law?

■ **Vote here : http://www.thamesvalley.police.uk/newsevents/newsevents-events/newsevents-events-cpa.htm**
Nominations close on Friday 20 February.

Blackbird Leys Parish Council

Thanks to the Blackbird Leys Parish Council for sponsoring this page

For Parish Council information please call 01865 716943 or go to www.blackbirdleysparishcouncil.gov.uk

Campaign to raise awareness of NHS crisis in Oxford

Photo courtesy of the Oxford and District Labour Party.

By **Richard Chidwick**

A CAMPAIGN to raise awareness of the current NHS crisis was held in Oxford.

The campaign received lots of signatures, with members of the Oxford Labour Party explaining why the NHS is facing a funding crisis with hospitals, GP surgeries and social care 'dangerously overstretched'.

A Labour Party Spokesman who was at the campaign said: "Just a few weeks ago we were warned the social care sector was on the verge of 'tipping point'. One in four patients are waiting a week or more to see their GP, or not getting an appointment at all, and thousands of patients are waiting hours in A&E and hospital trolleys."

"The crisis is of this Government's own making and it's up to Theresa May and Jeremy Hunt to take action. The Tories promised during the last election they'd properly fund our NHS. This is yet another example of Tory broken promises. By taking Labour's message to the public through our growing membership, we are trying to highlight Labour's growing concerns regarding NHS funding.

"Labour will end health service privatisation and bring services into a secure, publicly-provided NHS. We will integrate the NHS and social care for older and disabled people, funding dignity across the board and ensure parity for mental health services."

Labour has held national campaign days on rail fairs, the NHS and grammar schools. We will be holding campaign days every month on a variety of issues that affect everyday people"

THE WILDLIFE GARDEN

By **Stuart Mabutt**

In the palm of nature's hand

IT'S BEEN tough thinking creatively, or to even start to write this particular wildlife gardening article.

Why, well, my Mother passed away on December 29, and wow, how life has changed!

The one steadying factor is nature; all around if we are able notice it. I've been savouring each moment out in the garden, or at the local woods or lakes.

Time and thoughts move in really strange ways and to their own timetable at times like these. Nature, gives us a structure and reliability just when we need it. Getting on with it and adapting as it does.

I've been taking a camera out there with me, trying to keep my mind active and diverted from a downward spiral of thoughts.

Blue skies, offering reflections in water. Bird song, bringing a melody and a soundtrack to the moment in hand, with its feelings and emotions. The smells of crisp Winter mornings, as I feel destiny leading me by the hand. The taste of the Winter root vegetables, reminding me of warming childhood dinners my Mother use to make.

Just look over your shoulder, and your loved ones are keeping an eye on you. Don't worry about them as Mother Nature is keeping an eye on them in turn. Keeping them safe in the palm of her hand. Nature is there for us all. *Happy Wildlife Gardening.*

BLACKBIRD LEYS PARISH COUNCIL NEWS

By **John Charlton**

Dog fouling campaign to clean the Leys

Blackbird Leys Parish Councillors, Oxford City Council staff and local volunteer residents will be running a Dog Fouling Awareness campaign from March 13 to March 27 across Blackbird and Greater Leys.

This follows on from a very successful campaign undertaken a few months ago to improve the cleanliness of the estate.

Dog fouling is a major concern for residents on the estate and the Parish Council is keen to ensure the public are aware of how to dispose of the waste.

Teams will be out on the estate during the two week campaign providing information on how to dispose of waste and will be issuing dog waste bags.

For further information contact David Growcott at the Oxford City Council on 01865 252373

Leys Festival date announced

The 2017 Leys Festival and Horticultural Show will take place on Saturday 8 July. The annual arts, music, fun, horticulture, play and performance festival is a major event in Blackbird and Greater Leys.

For further details of acts and events and how to get involved contact David Growcott at Oxford City Council on 01865 252373

Memorial Garden official opening announced

The new memorial garden in memory of Councillor Val Smith will be officially opened on Saturday March 25 at 11.30.

The garden which is situated near the Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre will provide a peaceful space for members of the public to visit and enjoy.

The garden will also provide a memorial for Carol Roberts and Barbara Gatehouse who served the local community of Blackbird and Greater Leys.

Parish Council award grants to local community groups

Seven local community groups received grants from the Blackbird Leys Parish Council to assist in the running of their projects. Representatives from all the groups had to submit a detailed application form and make a five minute presentation to the Parish Council to explain the benefits to the community of their projects.

Grants were awarded to the following community groups: Leys Information Technology Zone, MY OX4 Lifeline, The Leys CDI, Oxford Polish Association, Friday Bingo Group, Friendleys and Oxford Blackbirds Football Club.

Parish Council Chairman Gordon Roper said: "We try to help as many local groups as we can and are pleased to be able to award the grants to these great projects. However with our own budgets being reduced it is going to be difficult in the future to help all these organisations."

The grants are awarded in January and June each year and those applying need to complete an application form.

■ **For further details and an application form email bblparishcouncil@gmail.com or visit www.blackbirdleysparishcouncil.gov.uk**

Blackbird Leys Parish Council

Next Meeting Dates:

- **Tuesday, 28 February, 7pm**
- **Tuesday, 28 March, 7pm**

Jack Argent Room, BBL Community Centre.

Parish Councillors

Gordon Roper (*Chair*), Ann Booker (*Vice Chair*), John Dillon, Chris Hatton, Daniel Jones, Kelvin Launchbury, Peter Nowland and Pat Stannard.

Phone (9am–5pm) **07754 271831**

Email **bblparishcouncil@gmail.com**

For further details of Parish Council news, meetings, minutes and other activities in Blackbird Leys please go to the community website **www.blackbirdleysparishcouncil.gov.uk**

Blackbird Leys Parish Council

LEYS LIFESTYLE

Go green this year and freshen up your living space

THE Pantone colour of the year for 2017 is Greenery; a fresh and zesty yellow-green shade that evokes the first days of spring when nature's greens revive, restore and renew. Every year, Pantone, which is the world's leading authority on colour for designers working in interiors, fashion and beauty, announces its new shade and this year it is all about going green.

Greenery (shade 15-0343) has been chosen because it symbolises the reawakening of nature in spring and is a symbol for a new beginning.

Open spaces in interior and exterior design and floor-to-ceiling windows allow the green outdoors to become part of a room's backdrop and ambiance. Adding Greenery through living walls, terrariums, botanically-themed wallpaper, paint, accent furniture and accessories provides respite and breathing space. A Greenery-painted wall or piece of furniture delivers a pop of colour, with the added benefit of creating the illusion of nature indoors.

Bringing the outside in, the shade – like the plant life it represents – can improve self-esteem, reduce anxiety and heighten awareness of one's surroundings.

If you would like to liven up your home this spring but you are not quite ready for a complete makeover, then why not take a look at our top ten of green home accessories for inspiration. Bring your rooms up to date with a splash of colour in the form of a new rug or vase, or paint a feature wall. As well as checking out high street shops and online options don't forget local charity shops for previously loved recycled bargains at a fraction of the price-that way you really can go green this spring.

1. Single stem vase, £1 from Wilko

2. Chenille cushion, £4 from Wilko

3. Green jug, £5 from Wilko

4. Three hanging wall plaques, £5 from Wilko

5. Vases from a selection at Marks and Spencer

6. Palm print shower curtain, £5 from Primark

7. Green knitted throw, £20 from Sainsbury's

8. Scented apple candle, £1.50 from Wilko

9. Set of wicker baskets from Sainsbury's

10. Accessories from the Garden Living Room range at Sainsbury's

The month of love and romance

THIS year it is estimated that as many as 25 million Valentine's Day cards will be sent in the UK, indicating that quite clearly the desire to declare your love on February 14 is still an important day for many people.

Love it or loathe it, the shops have been touting their romantic cards, flowers and other romantic trinkets for the last few weeks, and as we edge nearer to St Valentine's Day there is no doubt that the aisles of our supermarkets will be crammed full of red roses, cards, teddy bears and heart shaped chocolates.

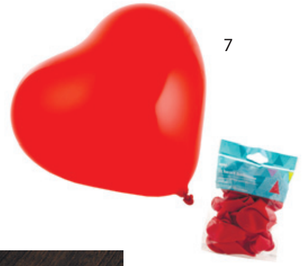
If you are planning to treat your loved one to a romantic treat this year, we have a few suggestions for how to mark the occasion:

♥ Instead of splashing out on expensive red roses, opt for tulips instead. They are in season now and generally much cheaper than roses.

♥ A meal out on Valentine's Day can break the bank. Instead, rustle up a romantic supper at home or take a picnic out and go for a romantic walk (weather permitting).

♥ Cards vary in price and quality and if you can't find one that has the perfect sentiment then make your own. Use card and either hand draw a design or decorate with issue paper flowers and hearts and embellish with sequins and beads. Check out craft shops for other ideas.

♥ Finding the perfect gift can be a bit fraught-instead find a smooth pebble and decorate it with a verse, a simple message or just the name of your loved one using a paint pen in gold, white or red.



If you still feel like heading online or to the high street, then here are a few extra ideas:

1. You're my cup of tea mug £4 from Sainsbury's

2. Heart shaped candles £10 from Sainsbury's

3. Lovebird water feeder £12.95 from www.dotcomgiftshop.com

4. Wooden rose heart £7 from Wilko

5. Perfect Match Game £3 from Sainsbury's

6. Wooden heart frame £6 from Wilko

7. Balloons £1 from George Home

8. Socks £4.99 from The British Heart Foundation

9. Jewellery from £9.99 from www.poppyshop.org.uk

Fun for children

Hello!

Well I don't know about you, but I am very excited that Spring is just around the corner. I have already spotted a few snowdrops popping up while I have been out walking with Jack, our very lazy Labrador, and soon the daffodils will start to open, bringing bright yellow splashes of colour to our gardens and parks.

Spring is a great time to get out for walks and see what nature is up to. If the weather is a bit wet, then why not spend some time watching the birds in your garden and send us some photos or drawings and paintings of what you see? We will print the best ones in our next issue.

If you are feeling creative, here are a couple of craft projects that you can get stuck into.

Have fun and don't forget to enter our Valentine's Day colouring competition to be in with a chance of winning some great prizes.

Love from Sarah x

Birds nest collage

You will need:
Large paper plate
Brown paint
Thin brown paper (*tissue, greaseproof or packing paper will all work*)
Brightly coloured card
Wiggle eyes
Scraps of yellow card or foam
Glue

Instructions:
1. Paint the back of the plate brown and leave to dry. Cut in half.
2. Cut the brown paper into strips and glue them to the plate. Don't worry about gluing all the edges as you are looking for texture.
3. Cut three ovals from coloured card and glue them along the edge of the plate.
4. Add a yellow beak and two wiggle eyes to each.

Blossom tree collage

You will need:
Paper
Brown wool
Pink tissue paper
Glue

Instructions:
1. Rip up small pieces of tissue paper and scrunch into balls.
2. Paint a tree shape in glue on the paper.
3. Stick on pieces of wool to make the trunk and branches.
4. Stick on the tissue paper balls as blossom.

Valentine's Day colouring competition

Name: ..... Age: .....

Name of parent or guardian: ..... Phone number: .....

Address: .....

The closing date for entries is 30 February 2017.

Send your entries to Leys News, 26 Kingfisher Green, Greater Leys, Oxford OX4 7BX

Chiltern Railways Schools Art Competition 2017

STUDENTS from primary and secondary schools across the Chiltern Railways network are being invited to get creative and showcase their skills by designing the covers of the new timetables.

The winning designs will be printed on the covers of the May 2017 timetables and seen by thousands of customers travelling on the entire Chiltern route between London Marylebone, Birmingham, Oxford and Aylesbury. Winners will also receive two one day family travel passes for travel anywhere along the route.

Themes for the May 2017 artwork are:
Travelling by train
Moving between locations
Your station within your town

The deadline for entries is Friday 3 March 2017,

■ **Further details can be found at:**
https://www.chilternrailways.co.uk/news/chiltern-railways-schools-art-competition-2017

Competition Winners

Colouring Competition
Congratulations to Aydan Burrows age seven from Greater Leys who won our Christmas colouring competition. Ayden receives a colouring set and other prizes.

FUNomusica Family Concert Competition
Congratulations to Graham Woelki of Blackbird Leys who won family tickets to the Oxford Philharmonic Orchestra concerts.

Win family tickets to Roald Dahl's Fantastic Mr Fox at the Oxford Playhouse

WE ARE giving away family tickets to see Roald Dahl's Fantastic Mr. Fox at the Oxford Playhouse on Tuesday 11 April.

Roald Dahl's Fantastic Mr. Fox is family fun at its finest. A tale of greed, determination and the power of friendship, this production, in celebration of the centenary of the birth of Roald Dahl, promises a huge theatrical feast. With live music and songs, it's perfect for the whole family this Easter holiday.

Boggis, Bunce and Bean are three smelly, horrid farmers who all really hate the cunning Mr. Fox. Mr. Fox is smart, clever and rather fantastic, but he doesn't realise how determined the farmers are to get him. Can he hatch a plan to save his family and friends? Can they outrun the diggers and keep one step ahead of the terrible trio? And can Rabbit shut up for long enough to not give the game away?

To win a set of Family tickets (4 x tickets up to 2 x adults) simply answer the following question: Who wrote Fantastic Mr. Fox?

A) Charles Dickens

B) Roald Dahl

C) Sue Townsend

Closing date for entries is 15 March 2017.
Age Guidelines: 5+
Usual Terms and Conditions apply and the editor's decision is final.

■ **Please email you answer to: officemanager@leysnews.co.uk and be sure to include your full name, address and contact phone number. Alternatively, you can post your entry to Fantastic Mr Fox competition, Leys News, 26 Kingfisher Green, Oxford OX4 7BX**

Rise in refugees in Oxford prompts local charity to recruit additional support

By **Richard Chidwick**

CONNECTION Support is seeking new volunteers to help in their bid to support people struggling with mental health, housing issues, debt, social isolation and homelessness.

Oxford, like many areas in the UK has seen the sudden rise in refugees from war torn countries in the Middle East.

Arabic speaking volunteers are needed to help Connection Support in their vital work with refugee families who are fleeing their country and arriving in Oxford through the government sponsored scheme.

Connection Support also work with the homeless, and recently participated in the Oxford Big Sleep Out. Angela Dormon, Volunteer Coordinator at Connection Support said: "We have a small team of volunteers who are involved in a variety of ways with our different services: With the Outreach service, volunteers accompany our Outreach Worker to locate and verify rough sleepers in order to help them into more stable accommodation.

"They also help by assisting with Syrian refugee families in Oxford interpreting and helping families at meetings and appointments or with settling into the community, as well as assisting Support Workers to help with tasks such as accompanying clients to appointments, attending assessments with our workers, setting up utilities or accounts, accessing community services, budgeting and general home organisation."

Angela said: "Volunteers will be given the opportunity to go out on shadow visits and assessments with our Support Workers to gain an understanding of our clients and the way in which we can provide support. Volunteers are given an induction and invited to attend relevant training and supervision sessions."

Diabetes Prevention

Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire work together to tackle rising levels of potentially life-threatening condition

FROM April this year, people at risk of Type 2 diabetes in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire will be offered tailored support to avoid the potentially life-threatening condition.

A successful bid to be selected by NHS England as participants in the pioneering NHS Diabetes Prevention Programme was put together by the clinical commissioning groups (CCGs) and County Council public health departments in Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire. As a result, people identified as being at high risk by their GP will be offered education and lifestyle coaching to reduce their risk of Type 2 diabetes.

Type 2 diabetes can cause serious health issues including blindness and kidney failure as well as complications resulting in amputation. In some cases people with the condition can develop life-threatening conditions such as heart disease. It is estimated that diabetes costs the NHS around £10 billion a year.

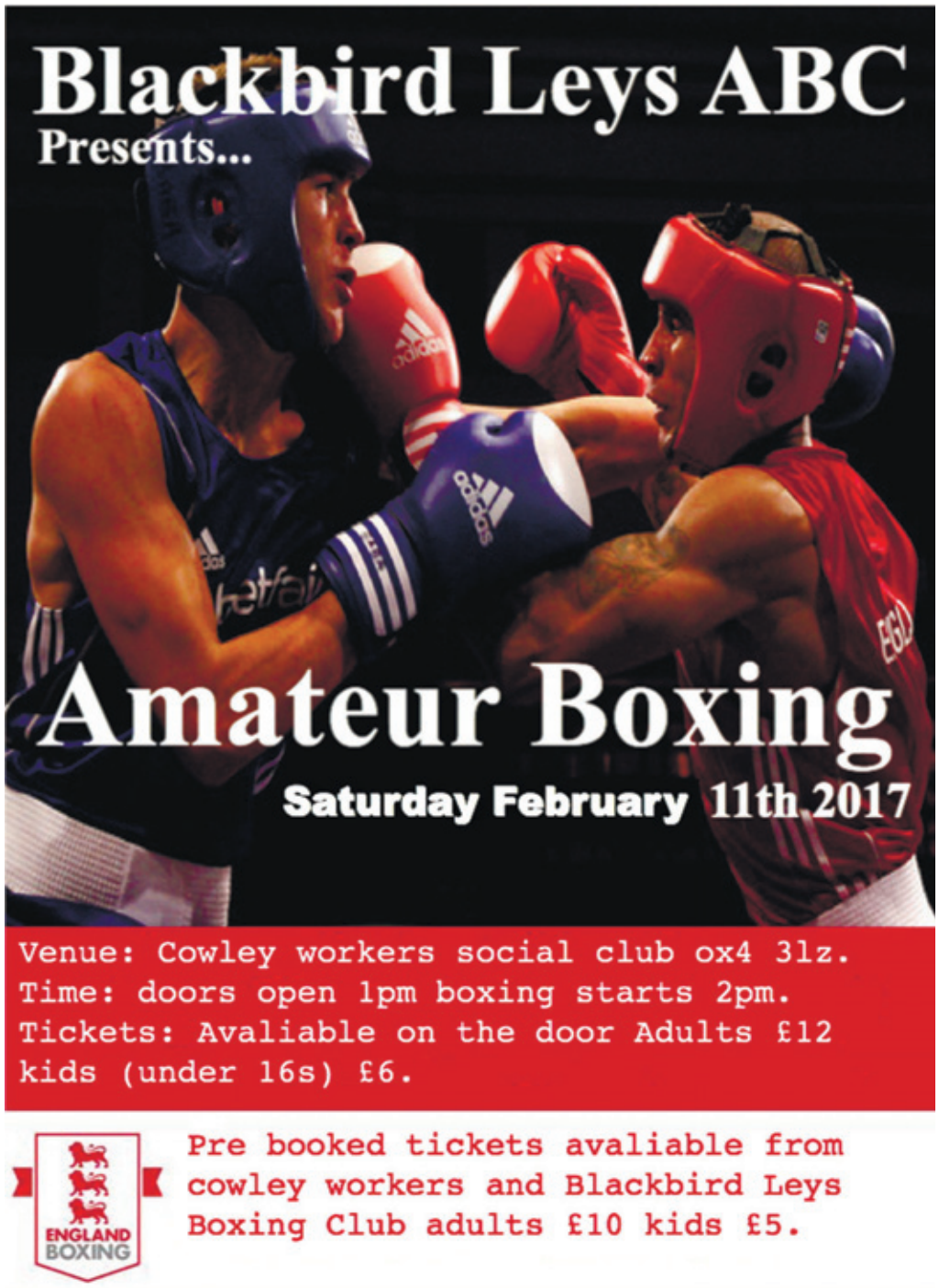
Dr Stuart Logan, Clinical Director for Long Term Conditions for both Buckinghamshire CCGs, said: "We know that people who are helped to make lifestyle changes can dramatically reduce their risk of developing Type 2 diabetes, so we are delighted to be able to increase the diabetes prevention work we are doing and know that this will benefit more people in the local area."

Dr Amar Latif, Clinical Lead for Long Term Conditions for Oxfordshire Clinical Commissioning Group, said: "This is a really exciting opportunity for us to tackle the ticking time bomb that is diabetes. Prevention is the best approach and I believe patients will embrace the scheme knowing they're taking a positive step towards a healthier future."

Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire is one of 13 areas across the country selected to take part in a further roll-out of what is the world's first nationwide programme to stop people developing Type 2 diabetes.

The programme will support 100,000 people a year across the whole country by 2020 through tailored, personalised help to reduce their risk, including education on healthy eating and lifestyle, help to lose weight and bespoke physical exercise programmes, all of which have been proven to reduce the risk of developing the disease.

■ **Anyone worried about the risk of diabetes and what they can do to reduce their risk can find out more at www.nhs.uk/diabetes**



Family dinners replaced by technology

OVER half of British parents have revealed that they once planned to continue family traditions and habits, but over time technology and busy lifestyles have taken over.

According to research released today, eating at the dinner table is the family tradition most at risk, with families preferring to sit in front of the TV or a computer screen.

A survey has found that eating at the dinner table and reading bedtime stories to children are the family traditions most likely to be replaced by technology, as parents struggle to incorporate such traditions into modern day life.

The survey was carried out by home interiors specialist www.hillarys.co.uk. 2,197 British parents were quizzed about their family traditions, all of whom were aged 18 and over and had stated that they had at least one child under the age of 15 years old.

Initially, all respondents were asked 'Did you plan to carry on any family traditions and habits with your own family that you were brought up with as a child?' to which the majority of respondents confessed they 'had planned to, but hadn't managed to' (53%). The remaining respondents either stated that 'no' (27%) they had not planned to continue family traditions and habits or they had planned to and succeeded (20%).

All respondents who stated that they had not managed to carry on family traditions and habits were asked why, to which the most common responses were 'technology has taken over' (33%) or 'they didn't fit with my family and our lifestyle' (30%).

All respondents were then asked which family traditions they had let slip over time. When provided with a list of possible responses and told to select all that applied, the top five responses were as follows:

- Eating around the dinner table, 73%
- Bedtime stories, 55%
- Travelling games, such as in the car, 43%
- Family movie night, 25%
- Family board game night, 21%

Of those who stated technology has replaced eating around the dinner table, 57% confessed that their families now sit altogether in front of the TV, while the remaining 43% confessed that their families go into separate rooms in order to watch various programmes on the TV or computer.

According to the poll, of those who stated that they continued family traditions, the top traditions they'd managed to maintain were revealed as 'weekly meals such as Sunday roasts, fish supper Fridays' (19%) and 'attending church' (10%).

Tara Hall, spokesperson for www.hillarys.co.uk, said: "Technology is an important part of our lives, but so is spending time with our families, talking, playing and making memories."

ADVERTISEMENT

Oxford Wood Recycling

By **Richard Chidwick**

OXFORD Wood Recycling is based in Abingdon and supplies reclaimed timber, interesting wood and accessories to the general public in Oxfordshire and beyond for construction, DIY and crafting.

The company was set up in June 2005 as a social enterprise by CEO and founder member Richard Snow together with two colleagues. Oxford Wood Recycling support volunteering for people from all backgrounds and work closely with organisations such as Restore in Oxford whose wood products can also be found on sale at OWR's Wood Shop in Abingdon.

Richard said: "We make over 1500 collections each year of waste wood from the construction industry and from this recover around 300 tonnes of wood for reuse. We currently employ 17 people in Abingdon and work with 20 to 30 volunteers per year. We think it is a worthwhile thing to do and it's a very satisfying business to be part of.

"Our links with the Restore mental health charity go way back and it's an important partnership for us. Hopefully we can develop this and other opportunities to involve people with wood working skills to help us realise our product range and to increase their confidence and readiness to return to work."

Oxford Wood Recycling is owned by its members that include employees and regular volunteers, who are committed to growing a business that is socially inclusive, economically sustainable and furthers the reduction, reuse and recycling of wood waste across the county and beyond.

While the company aims to generate a profit, any profit is reinvested this back into the business to create more jobs, products and services.

■ **For more information go to www.oxfordwoodrecycling.org.uk/**

OxClean announce dates for Spring Clean 2017

By **John Charlton**

OXCLEAN, the Oxford Civic Society initiative dedicated to keeping Oxford clean and tidy all year round have announced the dates for the weekend Spring Clean. Groups across Oxford will be coming together to clean, tidy and collect waste over the weekend of Friday 3 to Sunday 5 March.

The project aims to ensure that the beautiful city of Oxford is a welcoming and pleasant place for people to live, work and visit. OxClean works in partnership with Oxford City Council and local community groups and schools.

In 2016, over 80 groups from across the city took to the streets, public spaces and grotspots and cleaned up a large quantity of litter. As a result of their hard work, over six tonnes of litter plus a lot of flytip was removed from the streets and parks of Oxford. The sight of so many people out litter picking again raised awareness that a cleaner and tidier city is a better place to be. Spring Clean Dates: Friday 3, Saturday 4 and Sunday 5 March.

■ **For further details and to volunteer contact the Oxford Civic Society, 67 Cunliffe Close, Oxford, OX2 7BJ. Telephone: 07505 756 692 Email: info@oxclean.org.uk**

Colleges' greed puts Green Belt and City at risk says campaigners

THE Council for the Protection of Rural England says that the Oxford Green Belt around the city is under attack from developers which could destroy access to open countryside and damage rural villages and market towns.

Plans for more than 17,000 houses on seventeen separate sites are being put forward by landowners and developers, including Oxford City Council, Oxford University and several Colleges, to be built on the Green Belt in the next fourteen years.

This is happening despite declared-cross-party support for the protection of the Green Belt and against the wishes of the clear majority of local residents, 76% of whom wish the Green Belt to remain undeveloped, and the majority of whom see housing as the greatest threat.

Many of the largest housing developments proposed on the Oxford Green Belt are on land owned by Oxford University and the Colleges, including:

- 3,500 houses at Grenoble Road to the south east of the city on land owned by Magdalen College and Oxford City Council
- 2,200 houses between Oxford and Kidlington on land owned by Christ Church, Exeter College, Merton College and Oxford University Press;
- 2,200 houses at Wick Farm, north west of Barton, near the village of Elsfield on land owned partly by Christ Church
- 1,650 houses on land at Begbroke on land owned by Oxford University and Magdalen College; and
- 2,000 houses to the south east of Oxford, next to Garsington on land owned by Brasenose College.

The CPRE says that this is just the tip of iceberg and is calling on Oxford Colleges to re-think their plans before they risk damaging not only the Green Belt, but also the historic City of Oxford.

Helen Marshall, Director of CPRE Oxfordshire said: "We need to stop this gravy train before it leaves the station. These attacks on the Oxford Green Belt are unprecedented in the history of our Green Belt, which is designed specifically to protect our historic City from urban sprawl of this kind.

"It shows the flaws in the argument of allowing small parts of the Green Belt to be opened up to development – it is clear that the merest whiff of an opportunity gets all the vultures circling.

"The Colleges will claim altruism, but we don't believe this will make any difference at all to those in housing need – the houses proposed are very unlikely to be genuinely affordable. In fact it is basic property speculation and will deprive existing local communities of access to the countryside and impact on their quality of life in other ways. Trying to accommodate 30,000 or more new people moving in and out of the City on a daily basis is likely to lead to gridlock and increased air pollution.

"There are other positive solutions to explore. We should instead be prioritising brownfield sites in the City such as Osney Mead, looking at much better use of land through higher density developments and considering more creative solutions to affordable housing need, such as community-led housing projects.

"Most importantly, we need to think about how much growth Oxford and Oxfordshire can accommodate sustainably, and how much it is right to impose on our rural County with already full employment, and whether development should actually be targeted elsewhere in the country, where housing is cheaper and jobs are scarce.

"Our Oxford Green Belt is there for the benefit of all of us, and helps to make Oxford and Oxfordshire a wonderful place to live. We mustn't let already wealthy landowners like Magdalen and the other Colleges take over the Green Belt at the expense of local people, the countryside and the future prosperity of Oxford."

■ **To find out more about CPRE's Campaign to Save the Oxford Green Belt and Protect the Historic City of Oxford go to http://bit.ly/29l5U9N**

Helping people to reach their full potential

By **Sarah Edwards**

Wendy Spray.

THE beginning of a new year is traditionally the time when many of us start making plans that we hope will set us on a positive and fulfilling course for the 12 months ahead. While it is all too easy to hibernate in the winter, it is actually a great time for reflection and forward planning.

For coach Wendy Spray, 2017 already looks like it will be a very busy year. Having been made redundant in June last year from her role leading the community development team for Green Square Housing in Oxford, Wendy started her own coaching business.

With more than 13 years of experience as a coach, Wendy has now made it her mission to help people reach their full potential.

She said: "I worked for Green Square for 15 years, and during that time I had leadership training and found that I really enjoyed the coaching element. That lead to me taking a couple of training courses to improve my skills and then I could use those skills within my job and outside.

"When I was made redundant, starting my own coaching business seemed like the next logical step." Wendy had support from Oxfordshire marketing company www.itiger.co.uk, to get her website up and running and to work out what her unique selling point was going to be.

Wendy said: "Marie from itiger was brilliant and got me up and running with a website and marketing plan in no time."

She decided that her client group would include academics and coaching employees and board members in the voluntary and statutory sectors but Wendy is keen to work with anyone who is at a crossroads and needs a plan.

She added: "I love coaching because it is a simple way to give people a safe space where I can ask questions and help people without them feeling they are being judged. People often have the answers but need the time and space to think things through.

"Coaching can have such a big impact on people to enable them to get closer to their goals."

Wendy is very clear that she is not a counsellor, however if she feels her clients have issues that need further help, she will suggest counselling or therapy to them.

"People used to talk to their families or friends but often there is too much baggage attached to doing that. Coaching offers people the opportunity to explore new ideas and make a plan to achieve their goals."

So far Wendy has helped clients who need to make changes to their working lives, coached people who have been out of work and need help with interview techniques and their CVS and supported line managers who have just taken on new responsibilities.

She added: "I have also supported people who are planning their retirement, need help with their performance at work and those who are facing redundancy. Work life balance and time management are also areas that I find many people need help with.

"Throughout my career, I have had a coaching style of management as I strongly believe this is the most effective way to get the best outcomes for both the individuals and the organisation."

■ **To find out more about Wendy visit www.wendyspraycoaching.co.uk or email spraycoaching@hotmail.co.uk**

CLASSIFIEDS

Reach new customers in your local area with a Leys News Classified ad.

Advertise your business from as little as £10 per issue (when booking for 12 months).

To book your space ring John on 01865 711756

ELECTRICIANS

Calvin Pennant
71 Long Lane, Oxford OX4 3TN.
☎07960 328170

Hawtin Electrical
☎07811 401279
jameshawtin@hawtin-electrical.co.uk
www.hawtin-electrical.co.uk

COMPUTERS

Friendly Computer Support
☎01865 469069
& 07884 318 464
efaria@gmx.co.uk

CLEANING

Molly Maid
Oxford.
☎01865 327361

CARERS

Acquire Care
Oxford Science Park, OX4 4GP.
☎01865 338050

CHILDMINDING

Arar Childminding
☎07417 439520
ararchildminding@gmail.com

FAST/TAKEAWAY FOOD

Spice Box
Unit 16, Chiltern Business Centre
Garsington Road, OX4 6NG
☎ 01865 395999 or 712800

Chillies Indian Cuisine
Dunnock Way, OX4 7EX.
☎ 01865 775849

Dominos Pizza
57 Between Towns Road, OX4 3LR.
☎01865 777137

Cafe Spice
98/98a The Parade, Rose Hill, OX4 4HX
☎01865 747575
info@cafespiceoxford.co.uk

Papa John's Pizza
80 Rose Hill, Oxford, OX4 4HS.
☎01865 402050

Pizza Hut
3 Courtlands Rd, Rose Hill,
OX4 4HS.
☎01865 236116

Pizza Polo
34 Cowley Rd, Littlemore, OX4 4LD.
☎01865 425630

FLORISTS

Joe Austin
174 Cowley Road, OX4 6NQ.
☎01865 792037

GARDENS

The Garden
99–100 The Market, OX1 3YD.
☎01865 240709

Acorn Nursery
Stadhampton, Oxford.
☎01865 891663

Oxford Garden Centres
South Hinksey, OX1 5AR.
☎01865 326066

Pathway Workshop
Dunnock Way, OX4 7EF.
☎01865 714111

Wyevale Garden Centre
Suthern-By-Pass, Oxford.
☎01865 326066

FOR SALE

LITTLE STEPS CLOTHING
Children / babies fashion
clothing at low prices.
Littlestepsclothing.co.uk

JOBS

Start your own business
with Neals Yard Remedies.
☎ Katie 395960
kches2001@yahoo.com

HAIRDRESSERS

Hair & Body Shop
Ozone Park, Grenoble Rd, OX4 4XP.
☎01865 775817

Beyond Hair & Beauty
94 Blackbird Leys Rd, OX4 6HS.
☎01865 778709

Spirit Hair Design
☎01865 777515
spirithairdesign@gmail.com

PERSIA HAIR DESIGN
Professional, experienced in threading
eyebrow/full face. Beauty treatments,
holistic therapy and hairdressing
20 Florence Park Rd, Cowley, Oxford OX4
3PH
☎ 01865 777059
www.persiahairdesign.co.uk

HEALTH & BEAUTY

Bathe in Beauty
The Ozone Health and Fitness Club,
Kassam Stadium.
☎01865 335300
www.batheinbeauty.co.uk

Lisa's Beauty and Tanning
☎ 07887296583
www.facebook.com/
LisasbeautyandTanning

PLUMBERS

Roy Barrett
154 Herschel Cres, OX4 3TY.
☎01865 242641

Safe Heating & Plumbing
37 Druce Way, OX4 6TJ.
☎01865 772303

Hanson's Plumbing & Heating
22 Hawthorn Close, OX2 9DY.
☎01865 244172

PROPERTY

SELL YOUR HOUSE FAST!!
We can pay £10,000 more!
3 & 4 bedroom houses URGENTLY needed! We will rent or buy!
Call Jackie or Anthony NOW for a FREE & PRIVATE chat:
01865 575 995
Property Problem Solver

Problem selling or renting your residential or rental property?
Difficulty selling or renting?
Want a fast sale at near market price?
Solutions for properties with little or no equity, refurbishment work taken on. Whatever your circumstances there may be a solution for you.
☎ Call Marilyn on
01865 308067
or 07990 630 332
E: marilyn@soloassist.co.ok

TAXIS

ABC
70A Hollow Way, OX4 2NH.
☎01865 597029

Air Link Oxford
24 Vicarage Close, OX4 2NH.
☎01865 434040

Oxford Cars
Regus, 7200 The Quorum, OX4 21Z.
☎01865 406070

WINDOW CLEANERS

MRF
37 Green Hill, OX4 7UD.
☎01865 777889

Taylors Windows
Greater Leys.
☎01865 773486

CALLING ALL SPORTSMEN AND WOMEN!

Would you like your sporting achievements featured in Leys News?

Email us at editor@leysnews.co.uk or call 01865 711756

WHAT'S ON IN THE LEYS

A quick guide to what's available locally. If you have a service or event you'd like to include, please ring 01865 711756

ADVICE

■ **Agnes Smith Advice Centre**
96 Blackbird Leys Road. Gives free independent and impartial debt advice and counselling.
Drop-in sessions: Mondays, 10am–12pm and Fridays, 10am–12pm.
Also in the Farmhouse,
Tues and Thurs, 10am–12pm.
☎ 01865 770206

■ **Young People's Jobshop**
Every Wednesday, 1.30–3pm at the Early Intervention Blackbird Leys Young People Centre. Ages 16–19.
Speak to an advisor for FREE one-to-one advice.

■ **Leys Job Club**
Free support for anyone who would like help with learning or training, or would like to consider a new job, or taking up work for the first time.
Sessions are held at the Youth and Community Centre every Wednesday from 10am–12pm. Just drop in.
Other job club sessions are held in the Children's Centre, please call for details.
☎ Call or text, 0793 1400 108

CHILDREN

■ **New Baby Group Inc. Breastfeeding Café**
Wednesdays, 1pm–2.30pm at Leys Children's Centre, Cuddesdon Corner.
☎ Contact Mikko Enticknap for Baby Group and Camille Kalaja for Breastfeeding Café
01865 773263

■ **Blackbird Leys Youth Centre**
Blackbird Leys Road. Variety of activities and advice for young people.
☎ 01865 772886.

■ **BLAP Afterschool Club**
Outdoor and indoor activities for yrs 8–13 in a structured environment.
3.15–5.30pm. £1.50 per session
☎ 07530933690 and 01865 236646
blap76@yahoo.co.uk

■ **Maluchy group**
For Polish speaking families with children ages 0–5 years. Second Saturday in the month, 10.15am–11.45am, at Children's Centre, Cuddesdon Corner, Cuddesdon Way.
☎ Agata, 07874 187 704

■ **Brownies**
Holy Family Church Hall.
☎ Jennifer Pleass, 07886 757338
bblbrownies@gmail.com

■ **35th Oxford Scout Group**
☎ Duncan Bowler,
0776 6293353

DOVECOTE AFTERSCHOOL CLUB
Runs Tuesday to Thursday, 3.30–5.15pm, £1.30 per session.
☎ 01865 712299
and 07974 234661

■ **Oxfordshire (The Rifles) Battalion Army Cadet Force**
Thursdays, 7.30–9.30pm at Sandy Lane West. Boys and girls ages 13 to 18.
☎ 01869 259681

■ **Mother and Toddler Bounce**
Trampoline Sessions suitable for mothers and toddlers held on Thursdays, 10.30–11.30am. Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre.
☎ Fiona, 07891 419793

■ **Strawbery Fayre Majorettes**
Training every Wednesday at the Barn in Nightingale Avenue, Greater Leys, 6.30–8.45pm.
☎ Eleen Filer, 01865 717781

■ **Teenage Rounders Class**
Tuesdays, 4–5pm
£1.20. For 14–18 year olds Blackbird Leys Leisure Centre

■ **Rainbows**
For girls aged 5–7 years.
Fridays during term time, 5.30–6.30pm, at the Holy Family Church Hall on Cuddesdon Way.
☎Alexandra, 07804 500313

■ **Air Cadets**
Mon and Wed, 7.30–9.30pm,
Sandy Lane West.
Boys and girls aged 12½ to 20 years.
☎ 01865 777055
oc.2210@aircadets.org

EDUCATION

■ **Able Centre**
Cuddesdon Way. Free courses in Maths and English.
☎ Nicky, 01865 7286

BLACKBIRD LEYS LIBRARY
Cuddesdon Way.
Books, DVDs, audio books, use of computers for adults and children, photocopying etc.
Opening times:
Mon, Wed, Thur: 9am–12pm and 1.30–5pm
Tue: 9am–12pm
Sat: 9.30am–12.30pm
Friday Closed.
☎ 01865 770403

LEISURE

■ **The Oxford Community Choir**
All welcome.
☎ Hannah, 07512 364367
hannah

■ **Irish dancing**
Sacred Heart Hall. Weds and Thurs, 5pm.

■ **Blackbird Leys Bowls Club**
Cuddesdon Way. The Club is looking for new members. Open night every Tuesday from 6pm.
☎ David Buckwell, 01865 881735
or Gordon Roper, 01865 361047

■ **Girls Football (15+)**
Mondays, 6.30pm. FREE.
☎ Marc Fleckney, 07920 463623
Mafleckney@gmail.com

■ **Indoor Bowls Club**
Sandy Lane West. Club is looking for new members and invites men, women, boys and girls of all ages and abilities.
☎ 01865 775891
or email oxbowls1@yahoo.co.uk

LEYS POOLS AND LEISURE CENTRE
Opening Hours
Monday to Friday: 6am–10pm
Saturday: 6am–8pm
Sunday: 8am–8pm
Bank Holiday: 7am–8pm
Pegasus Road, Blackbird Leys, Oxford, OX4 6JL
☎ 0844 893 3222

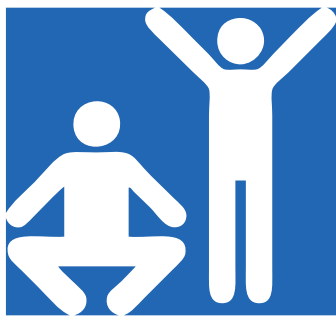
OXFORD UNITED EDUCATION AND FOOTBALL ACADEMY
Still spaces available for our Education and Football course for boys and girls aged 16–19.
Please email Chad for more details.
01865 336138
chadwoollands@oxfordunitedlearning.co.uk
www.oulfc.co.uk

OLDER PEOPLE

■ **Walking Football**
Oxford City FC, Saturdays, 10–11am.
Waking football, does what is says on the tin! Football but no running allowed.
£3.50.
Anna McKay, 01235 849403
annamckay@ageukoxfordshire.org.uk

■ **Monday & Friday Lunch Club**
Frys Court, 2 Nightingale Avenue,
OX4 7WJ.
☎ Anne Appleton, 422231

■ **Over 60s Bingo Club**
Wednesdays 1–3pm
Blackbird Leys Bowls Club
☎ David Stonehill 01865 777074
or Anne Ranger 01865 430504



FREE courses at BLITZ

The BLITZ IT hub is offering free courses to help people who live in the Leys to improve their IT and computer skills. Complete beginners welcome. (FOR MORE DETAILS SEE PAGE 13)

Call us on 01865 806453
or drop in and see us in Blackbird Leys Community Centre

Skills Funding Agency · Oxfordshire County Council · Oxford Brookes University · Blackbird Leys Parish Council

WELLBEING

■ **Skiptrix Fitness Class**
Get fit, tone and lose weight.
Thursdays, 6.30–7.15pm at the Ark T Centre, Cowley.
Satudays, 10–10.45am at the Barn, BBLeys. £4 per class.
☎ Trish, 07957754355
trishwisdom@yahoo.co.uk

■ **Yoga For All**
Experienced Yoga teacher.
☎ Linda Highland, 01865 432570

■ **ZUMBA Fitness Party**
Tues, 6.30–7.30pm at The Oxford Academy School, Sandy Lane West.
☎ 07714 248177 zumbasarahoxford@gmail.com www.zumbasarahoxford.com

■ **The Listening Centre**
Counselling service based at Cuddesdon Corner Family Centre.
☎ 01865 794794

■ **Oxfordshire Mind**
Short courses, groups and other support are available for anyone with a mental health problem. To find out more drop in to the Cowley Wellbeing Centre in St James' Hall, 26 Between Towns Road.
☎ 01865 247788

■ **Tai Chi & Qigong**
Class every Thursday morning 9.45–10.45am. Ark T Centre, Crowell Road, Cowley. £5 and £6. First class half price.
☎ 07974185554

■ **Rosewood Club**
for people with dementia
Open weekdays, 9.30am–3pm. Providing a stimulating, enjoyable and social day while your family carer gets a well-earned break. £12 per day all inclusive, plus a transport charge if used.
☎ To arrange an informal visit call Julie Perks 749349 or email rosewood@daybreak-oxford.org.uk

■ **Survivors**
Fridays and Saturdays, Blackbird Leys Community Centre, 9.30am–3pm.
A self-help group of people who use or have used Mental Health Services, working together to get support or to share experiences. Lunch available for £1.
☎ 07729 581975

■ **MYOX4**
Community recovery project for individuals wishing to achieve and maintain abstinence from drugs and alcohol also promoting healthy lifestyles and wellbeing with free and confidential advice and support.
9 Knights Rd, Blackbird Leys, Oxford. OX4 6HU
☎ 01865 778163
E: seanqualter.lifeline@gmail.com
facebook: www.facebook.com/LifelineOxfordService

NOTICES

THE LEYS WI

Meets the first Wednesday of each month, 7.30pm, at The Clockhouse. All ladies aged 18 or over are welcome to attend. Next meeting will be on 6 July.

☎ 0 7973 336 041

W: www.theleyswi.moonfruit.com

E: theleyswi@yahoo.co.uk

SOCIALIST PARTY MEETING

Last Tuesday of every month at Leys Links Centre, Blackbird Leys Road. Starts 7.30pm

☎ 0208 9888777

THE CLOCKHOUSE COMMUNITY CENTRE

Put a spring in your step at The Clockhouse

The Clockhouse in Greater Leys has a packed programme of activities lined up for the spring, with something for everyone.

If you are thinking of trying something new or just want to enjoy fun and friendship, the Clockhouse has a wide range of activities for the over 50s.

Tea-Time Social
Every Monday (except half term, 13 February). Enjoy a cup of tea and a chat, plus board games. Now includes a chance to play Boccia which is like indoor bowls. 1.30–3.30pm. £1. Tel: 01865 395908

Age UK Drop-In
Next one is on Monday 27 February, 2–3.30pm. Friendly information and help on over-50s services and activities in Oxford. Tel: 01865 395908

New! Family History (Free)
Delve into the past and discover your family history. At Blackbird Leys Community Centre, Blackbird Leys Road. Free introductory workshop on Friday 10 February, 12–3pm. Then free five-session course on Fridays 24 February to 24 March, 1–3pm. No previous computer knowledge needed, full support will be given. Joint WEA/Leys CDI course. For more details and to book your place please telephone 01865 395908.

Over-50s Advice (Free)
Mondays, 30 January and 27 February. Book appointments 10am–12pm. Tel: 01865 395908

Yoga
Every Tuesday, 10–11am (except half term, 14 February). £2. Tel: 01865 395908

Wednesday Crafts
Weekly, 11am–12.30pm. Bring your knitting, crochet, sewing or drawing/colouring, and join us for a natter. £1. Tel: 01865 395908

Tai Chi
Every Thursday, 10–11am, £2. Boost your flexibility, improve your fitness and have fun. Tel: 01865 395908

Art Group
At Potters Court, Robin Place, Greater Leys OX4 7FF. 23 February, 2–4 pm. £1, includes materials. Tel: 01865 395908

Evening Socials
Adults of all ages welcome!
7–9pm. £2. Wednesday 22 February: Quiz Night. Tel: 01865 395908

Computer Courses (Free)
Beginners welcome! Tel: 01865 395908

Volunteer car drivers needed!
Help Leys residents with mobility difficulties to reach Clockhouse Project activities. For details tel: 01865 395908.

Leys WI
First Wednesday of month, 7.30–9.30 pm. 1 February: Leys WI AGM. We welcome all women over 16 for a couple of free visits. Hope you'll enjoy it and become a member. Email: theleyswi@yahoo.co.uk or ring 01865 395908.

Daybreak's Rosewood Club
Fun, sociable and stimulating days for people with dementia, and a break for their carers. £15 a day (including a hot two course meal) plus a transport charge if used. For details or to book an initial visit please telephone 01865 749349.

About us
The Clockhouse Project works with/for over-50s living in the Leys area. It's part of local charity Leys Community Development Initiative (Leys CDI).
The Clockhouse building is supported by Catalyst, GreenSquare, and A2Dominion, to benefit the local community.

■ **The Clockhouse Community Centre**
Long Ground
Greater Leys OX4 7FX
(look for the clocks on the roof)

☎ **Sally Meachim, 01865 395908**

E: clockhousecdi@btconnect.com

BLACKBIRD LEYS COMMUNITY CENTRE

● **Credit Union**
Community financial service for savings and low cost loans
Opening Times: Mondays 11am–1pm, Tuesdays 7–7.30pm, Wednesdays 10am–12pm, Fridays 3–5pm
☎ 01865 718503

● **Blackbird Leys Community Centre is a Wi-Fi Hotspot**
To use the free Wi-Fi please select 'Oxford Free Wi-Fi'

● **Early Intervention Service**
Early intervention and specialist services for children, young people and families
☎ 01865 816202

● **Home-Start**
Family support charity for under 5s.
☎ 01865 779991

● **Soundworks**
Music studio and production
☎ 01865 401585

● **IT HUB**
IT Hub open access drop in sessions.
Tuesdays 12–3pm
and Fridays 9am–12pm.

● **Leys CDI Youth Project**
After School Club and Arts Award Project, Mondays, 3.30–8pm
Battlefield of the Mind (Young women's project), Tuesdays, 3.30–7.30pm
Diversionary Project, Wednesdays, 12–8pm
Afterschool Club and Tech Fridays (starting in March), Fridays, 3.30–8pm
☎ 01865 395927

● **LITZ**
IT courses and trainings for all abilities. Course details available in the Centre reception.
☎ 01865 806453

JACK ARGENT ROOM

● **SR Oxford Survivors**
Self-help community group for over 16s. Fridays and Saturdays, 10.30am–2.30pm
☎ Trish, 07824 644874

● **Oxford Polish Association**
Mondays, 6–9pm
☎ For dates contact Ewa, 07585 442696

● **FriendLeys**
Community coffee morning, £2.50, includes refreshments, Wednesdays, 10.30am–1pm
☎ 01865 402070

● **Blackbird Leys Choir**
New members always welcome. Wednesdays, 6.30pm–9pm
☎ 07775 945279

SPORTS HALL

● **Boxing Club**
Juniors and Seniors.
☎ For details contact Tony, 01865 432995

● **GKR Karate**
Children (five Years to Adults)
☎ Stuart, 07852 292255

● **Kick Boxing & Self Defence**
7-16 yrs Tuesday 4-5pm Thursday 4.30-5.30pm Saturdays 12-1pm
16 yrs+ Tuesday 5-6pm Saturday 1-2pm
☎ 07518 502920

ROOMS AVAILABLE FOR HIRE

IT Hub: 12 networked PCs with fast wired internet connection, ceiling mounted projector and air conditioning.

Jack Argent Room: Seating for up to 60 people.

Sports Hall: Space for a wide range of activities.

First Floor Meeting Room: For up to ten people.

For more details contact Jayne on 01865 402070

■ **Blackbird Leys Community Centre**
Blackbird Leys Road, Blackbird Leys, OX4 6HW
T: 01865 402070
E: blackbirdleyscommcentre@oxford.gov.uk

LOCAL CHURCHES

■ **Church of the Holy Family**
Eucharist: Each Sunday, 10am, with children's activities.
Timeout: Reflective worship.
Most Sundays, 6.30pm.
Church Office Hour: Tuesdays 1.30-2.30pm and Thursdays 10-11am, or by appointment. For enquiries, hall bookings, wedding arrangements.

☎ Revd Heather Carter, 01865 778728
www.holyfamilybbl.co.uk

■ **Chrisco Ministries**
Meets at Jack Agent Room at the BBL Community Centre, Sundays, 11am–2pm
☎ 07533 845714 and 07737 564677

■ **Redeem Christian Church of God**
Meets at theSacred Heart, Sawpit Road.
Sunday Service: 2.30–5pm
Bible study: Wednesdays: 6–8pm, except last Friday of month.
☎ 07825 679044 and 01865 766056
www.RCCGLighthouse.co.uk

■ **Leys Community Church**
Now meets at Blackbird Leys Adventure Playground, Blackbird Leys Road.
☎ Andy and Nicci Longmore, 01865 779700
www.leyscommunitychurch.org.uk

■ **Sacred Heart Catholic Church**
Balfour Road, Blackbird Leys.
Sunday Masses: 9.30am, with music and children's liturgy; and at 6pm.
☎ 01865 776903

■ **Christian Harvest Ministries**
Meets at the Jack Argent Room at BBL Community Centre, Sundays, 3–5.30pm.
☎ Rev Alice Kinyanjui, 01865 701129

■ **Seventh Day Adventist Church**
1A Chester St, off Iffley Road.
Saturday first service: 9.45–11am.
Second service: 11.15am–12.30pm.
www.freebible.org.uk

■ **Mount Zion Ministries Oxford**
Glow Hall, Blackbird Leys Community Centre.
Sunday Service: 11am–1.30pm.
All night prayers: Fridays, 7–9pm.
Bible Study: Sundays, 11am–12pm.
☎ Rev Chris Ugwu, 07877 536406, 07932 964056
Email: mtzionoxford@yahoo.co.uk
www.mtzionox.org

■ **Kingsway International Christian Centre**
Sunday service: 11am–1pm, children's church runs concurrently.
Friday Prayer Meeting: 6–7pm.
The Barn, Nightingale Avenue, Greater Leys, OX4 7BU.
☎ 07951262426 admin@kiccoxford.org.uk
www.kiccoxford.org.uk

Take a break in the Isle of Wight

A FEW spaces are still available for a trip to the Isle of Wight on May 25 for five days. Price is £209 which includes local pick ups from Blackbird Leys, Cowley Centre and Iffley Road. The holiday includes breakfast and evening meal, entertainment and bingo every night. There are optional day tours. There are also beverages served en-route with bingo and raffle on board. There is one double room and two single rooms still available.

■ **For more information ring 07754 217128.**

Local Homelessness and Housing Charity has a new approach to tackling homelessness in Oxford

By **Richard Chidwick**

THE MAYDAY Trust was set up 40 years ago to provide housing support to people experiencing homelessness, leaving prison or care. Since that time, they transformed their business by developing a new way of working and thinking, based on feed-back they received from people experiencing homelessness.

Pat McArdle, Chief Executive of Mayday Trust, said: "Over the past five years, Mayday Trust has completely transformed from a traditional housing support service to an innovative, strength-based and personalised transitions service, so that homelessness becomes a transitional period, not a life sentence."

She said: "Traditional services have led to many people becoming institutionalised and unnecessarily trapped in dependency for years. Through the limited focus on creating positive friendships and networks in communities, many people repeatedly come back into homeless services as they feel part of a 'homeless community' rather than a member of wider society. This can be witnessed in many cities and urban districts where provision for those experiencing homelessness is limited to homeless hostels, day centres, homeless art classes and homeless GPs."

She added: "In response to this evidence, we have not only changed how we deliver support, but also how our entire organisation thinks, acts and responds to make sure that individuals are at the very heart of every decision they make and every action they take. This is why we developed the Personal Transitions Service that build on individual's strengths, skills and aspirations in a personalised way."

Mayday has been delivering this innovative approach in Oxford since 2013. Nikki Aitchison moved from Edinburgh to Oxford around four years ago and wanted to make a difference in people's lives. He is employed as a coach at Mayday, creatively working with people going through times, such as homelessness or leaving prison or care.

Nikki said: "Mayday Trust is there for anyone who is in a difficult situation and they need support to overcome their barriers and achieve things that matter to them. This can be someone with drug or alcohol addiction, being released from jail, or have mental health problems."

What makes Mayday different is that people are not judged about their past experiences. Coaches like Nikki work to find the spark in each person which makes them hopeful again, and finds bespoke opportunities in community so that people can make a fresh start, and see they can achieve their dreams and aspirations.

Nikki emphasised that the importance of local community members in helping people going through tough times. He said: "We need more people in our community to see person beneath the problem. There are many things people can offer, like making a place available in a football match, or a chess club or an arts class so that people with previous experience of homelessness can feel part of a big, strong community, and start contributing to their local areas in a positive way."

He added: "At the heart of our work is ensuring people are treated as 'people' and have the dignity, respect and basic rights. These are often lost when a person is labelled as 'homeless' or as having 'complex needs' and becomes a 'client' within the system. If we accept that everyone has a valuable contribution to make and worked together as a community in a way that is personal, simple and human in nature, then there would be no one trapped in homelessness."

■ **For more information, please contact Nikki Aitchison, nik-ki.aitchison@maydaytrust.org.uk or 01865 670 028**

ADVERTISEMENT

E.L.M LEGAL SERVICES

WORK WITHIN ESTATE PLANNING!!

- Sales Consultants required
- Self Employed
- Earning potential of £50k+
- Zero Telephone work
- Weekly Qualified Appointments within a 50 mile radius of your home
- Full training and ongoing support given
- Car, Computer & Mobile phone Essential

Please forward your CV to:
recruit@elm-online.co.uk

Visit: **www.elm-online.co.uk**